United Nations A/54/352

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 September 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 110
Advancement of women

Activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–4	2
II.	Programme framework for the biennium 1998-1999	5–6	2
III.	Highlights of the Institute's programme of activities	7–72	2
	A. Research programme	8–39	2
	B. Training programme	40–49	6
	C. Inter-agency activities	50–59	8
	D. Other activities related to research and training	60–63	9
	E. Information, documentation and communication	64–69	9
	F. The Institute's advocacy network	70–72	10
IV.	Financial situation of the Institute	73–74	10
V.	Conclusion	75	10

99-26553 (E) 300999

I. Introduction

1. This report is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 10 of resolution 52/95 of 12 December 1997, by which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the activities of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The report covers the period since the submission of the Secretary-General's previous report on INSTRAW (A/52/352) in September 1997 and focuses on the substantive activities carried out by the Institute during the period under review.

2. In its resolution 1999/54, adopted in July 1999, the Economic and Social Council requests the Secretary-General to draw up, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, a new structure and working method for the Institute and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, taking into consideration the views of interested States. Consultations with the Board of Trustees and interested Member States are under way and they will be reported on separately.

3. Further details on the financial and staffing situation of the Institute, including an analysis of the reasons for that situation and its implications for the Institute, information on the progress being made in the preparation of a strategic and comprehensive work plan, and information on the outcome of the Inter-Agency Brainstorming Workshop, as requested by the Council in resolution 1998/48 of 31 July 1998, are contained in the report of the President of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees to the 1999 substantive session of the Council (E/1999/105). Section IV of the present report provides an update on the financial situation of INSTRAW.

4. Within its current severe financial and staffing constraints, the Institute has been able to implement a modest but promising substantive programme of work, thus demonstrating its institutional potential and proving its capability to fulfil its unique role in pursuit of the advancement of women and gender equality.

II. Programme framework for the biennium 1998-1999

5. The Institute's work programme for the 1998-1999 biennium was prepared after the following elements were taken into consideration: the ongoing restructuring of the world economy and the consequent liabilities and opportunities for women; the policy decisions, mandates and plans of action of various United Nations conferences, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, and the INSTRAW Board of Trustees; and the continuation of programmes where INSTRAW has made significant contributions or breakthroughs. The work programme also took into consideration the availability of the financial resources necessary to ensure an effective implementation of planned activities during the biennium 1998-1999 and all relevant regulations and rules established by the United Nations.

6. The programme of work for the 1998-1999 biennium has been prepared with a general focus on the advancement of women rather than on the four thematic areas that previously determined the Institute's activities. The advancement of women is perceived as a continuous process, which involves empowerment, emancipation and equality. Such an approach was envisaged so as to provide INSTRAW with the flexibility to respond to emerging policy concerns relating to the advancement of women. The specific activities undertaken respond to the need to understand societal obstacles that constrain women's advancement and to help the process of their empowerment so that they become fully mobilized and adequately valued for their dynamic involvement in the development process.

III. Highlights of the Institute's programme of activities

7. The Institute's programmes for the biennium were built around three major research programmes and various training activities, which are discussed in detail below.

A. Research programme

8. During the 1998-1999 biennium, the Institute conducted research on the following topics: engendering the political agenda, temporary labour migration of women, and women networking for conflict prevention and resolution.

Engendering the political agenda

9. This research subprogramme was designed in response to increasing interest on the part of the international community in gender issues over the past two decades and emerging awareness of the critical importance of achieving gender equality. After the Fourth World Conference on Women, the discourse on gender increased markedly. The existence of multiple actors — the international women's movement, the United Nations and other international

organizations, and women's organizations, with their different gender agendas — has encouraged Governments to address women's issues and gender equality seriously.

10. INSTRAW recognized the importance of understanding how these new processes and diverse actors shape political aspects of gender equality issues in different countries as a means of enriching policy deliberations to strengthen Governments' accountability for sustainable gender equality measures. With these considerations in mind, the Institute designed a research subprogramme on engendering the political agenda for the 1998-1999 biennium.

11. As part of the project, INSTRAW conducted comparative case studies in the Dominican Republic, Romania and South Africa on the processes involved in the engendering of the political agenda, in order to document and analyse the following:

(a) How the interplay between the State, civil society and the international arena in their particular socio-economic, political and cultural contexts determines the extent to which diverse policy processes take women's and gender equality issues into consideration and affect gender-sensitive policies and programmes;

(b) What are the conditions and the strategies that lead to successful engendering of the political agenda?

The research was carried out around the issues of violence against women, women's sexual and reproductive rights, sexual exploitation and trafficking of women, women's social security rights, and the impact of customary law and practices.

12. The research findings have important bearings on policy deliberations, both at the international and the national levels, since they identify the principal challenges facing the inclusion of gender equality issues into policy-making and make consequent recommendations for measures to strengthen national capacities for gender mainstreaming. The findings may be an important contribution to the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,[1] and the Beijing Declaration[2] and the Platform for Action[3] of the Fourth World Conference on Women, five years after their adoption. After an examination of the interactions among the major actors in national policy deliberations and decision-making processes, the findings suggest means and strategies for increased synergy and convergence and also means by which policy implementation and accountability can be ensured. The three case studies reaffirmed that in order to create favourable conditions for engendering the political agenda, a synergy of activities of multiple local, national and international actors is needed.

13. South Africa appears to be a successful example, especially with reference to issues of violence against women and reproductive health. The historical moment of transition to democracy produced a particular set of circumstances that enabled positive conditions for gender-equality activists within and outside government to place gender issues on the national agenda. One of the most important factors in this process was the establishment of a rights framework in the Constitution with a particular commitment to gender equality and women's human rights. The rights-based approach served as a major reference point and justification which was used by women activists within the civil society, several political parties and the Government in pressing for normative changes. It is interesting to note that in the case of South Africa, in all three processes studied, the main interactions of gender equality activists were with Parliament and the state law reform committee rather than with government. Evidence of the research suggests that having "gender-sensitive" women and men in positions of power was important in ensuring that gender issues were placed on the political agenda.

14. In Romania, the process of transition to democracy and the willingness of the Government to adopt legislation have not yet brought about the creation of a "woman-friendly" State, as was the case in South Africa. One of the major reasons for this was the lack of an organized civil society movement and of awareness among political actors about issues of gender equality. The study shows that some normative changes taking place, particularly with regard to issues of violence against women and reproductive health, are results of increased pressures by international organizations operating in Romania. The study recommends that in order to promote governmental policies regarding women's rights and gender equality with a real capacity to induce positive change, it is of utmost importance to rethink the organizational structure of the national machinery within the Government and to increase its authority by diversifying its functions and providing an adequate budget.

15. The case study in the Dominican Republic suggests that, despite the fact that the country has embarked on a process of reform and modernization of the State, gender equality has not yet become a part of a wider process of institutional reform. The Government has entrusted the national machinery with gender concerns. Other governmental institutions have remained largely insensitive to the inclusion of gender concerns in their agendas. An

issue such as the prevention of violence against women can be successfully introduced into public policy through strategic alliances developed between women's organizations, women in Parliament and international organizations. The study raises concerns regarding the issue of maintaining the autonomy of the national machinery from international donor-based agendas. While the issue of trafficking and sexual exploitation of women is of great importance in the Dominican Republic, little attention has so far been given to this challenge, due to lack of funds.

16. It should be noted that the research findings in the three case studies confirm the important role played by United Nations conventions, resolutions, conferences, programmes and projects in the process of engendering the political agenda. The studies reveal that the involvement of the United Nations and other international organizations in the policy processes has strengthened their participatory nature. By reinforcing practices of creating broader consensus on certain policy issues, the United Nations and other donor agencies have helped ensure higher standards of implementation, sustainability and accountability. The research also notes that United Nations conventions and resolutions for women's organizations have served as important tools for legitimizing their demands and holding Governments accountable for compliance.

17. Certain common obstacles to the process of engendering the political agenda were identified. They were the lack of extension of the activities of women's machinery and women's organizations to local and rural areas, severe financial restrictions for relevant programmes and projects that address gender equality, and lack of technical expertise.

18. The case studies were discussed at an expert group meeting held in Romania on 2 and 3 September 1999. The experts discussed the role of different actors in the process of engendering the political agenda from different regional and national perspectives. The meeting resulted in the development of a framework for engendering the political agenda based on recommendations emanating from the research of the different actors engaged in the process of engendering politics and on recommendations on how to improve the coordination and the effectiveness of the activities of each of the actors involved.

19. The meeting concluded that successful gender mainstreaming is more likely to take place in countries where responsibility for it is not located in a single governmental body and where civil society is actively involved in advancing gender-equality issues. It further noted that, given that policy processes are complex and multilayered, the conventional understanding of national machinery needs to be reviewed. It was therefore recommended that Governments should establish multiple structures and mechanisms at all policy-making instances, to ensure effective gender mainstreaming; and review the status of gender focal points in order to ensure that they are strategically placed and have sufficient authority to influence policy-making.

20. The expert group meeting also highlighted the importance of civil society in engendering the political agenda and recommended that Governments and the international community devise mechanisms and procedures to encourage their involvement. Bearing in mind that civil society is not homogeneous and that non-governmental organizations do not represent all the views and interests of civil society, the meeting noted the need to promote flexible decision-making structures that incorporate community leaders, local governments, educational institutions and churches, among others.

21. The meeting noted the significant role that international organizations have played in getting gender equality issues into the national agendas. However, international organizations need to enhance the financial and human resources allocated for assisting Governments to mainstream gender. It was observed that the structure for coordinating United Nations activities at the country level needs to be strengthened by promoting the establishment of inter-agency committees on gender equality and by strengthening the capacity of gender focal points. The role of the country-level gender focal points in balancing local, national and international gender priorities was emphasized. Finally, it was recommended that the United Nations should continue to promote and support research on gender issues and to facilitate the development of partnerships between centres of knowledge around the world. Such partnerships would allow for the sharing of knowledge and the development of indicators for monitoring gender mainstreaming at the national level.

Temporary labour migration of women

22. This research subprogramme was designed to reflect the new division of labour between capital and labour, increasingly favouring the temporary labour migration of women. In some regions, notably Asia, a "feminization" of labour migration has taken place.

23. Because of their subordinate status, both as migrants and as women, female migrant workers are highly vulnerable to exploitation and ill treatment. Many migrant women work without any official working contracts and under highly unfavourable conditions, including low salaries, no

insurance, no control over working hours, violence etc. In addition, given the restrictions to labour migration in many sending and receiving countries, illegal migration and, consequently, the vulnerability of women migrants are increasing.

24. While a great deal has been written on the determinants of migration and the impact of male out-migration on the women who remain, less information is available on the reverse phenomenon — that is, the temporary migration of women and its impact on the families that remain behind. There is increasing concern about violence against migrant women, but little attention has been paid to how the migration of the woman of the family affects women's empowerment process, the structure of gender roles within the family and women's status. Furthermore, there is little empirical data on the impact of female labour migration on the family, in particular, on the girl child and the older women who may remain in the household, temporarily assuming many of the tasks and responsibilities of the migrating woman.

25. Given the lack of comprehensive data on the temporary labour migration of women and the impact on the families that remain behind, during 1999 INSTRAW commissioned the Marga Institute, headquartered in Sri Lanka, a country with a long and continuous tradition of temporary female labour migration, to conduct exploratory research on the topic.

26. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with INSTRAW, commissioned a parallel study in Bangladesh. Research was also conducted by the Marga Institute in Kuwait, where many women from both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh migrate to work primarily as domestics.

27. Preliminary findings of the Sri Lankan case study suggest that while there are obstacles to the successful outcome of female migration, in most cases the benefits to migrant women and their families are significant. The study found that the remittances of female migrants actually help their families to raise their level of income, gain access to better services, such as education and health, and improve the quality of life of their families.

28. With regard to the impact of female migration on women's empowerment, the study found that the female role had been enhanced, through an increase in decision-making power and through a complementarity of roles.

29. The study indicates that migrants who arrange their migration through the Sri Lankan Foreign Employment Bureau or recruiting agencies registered with the Bureau are less vulnerable to exploitation and ill treatment in both Sri Lanka and receiving countries. It therefore urges strict surveillance so as to ensure that all migrants have been duly registered.

30. The results of the two case studies were presented and discussed at a joint INSTRAW/IOM expert group meeting on 30 and 31 August 1999 in Geneva. The participants highlighted the importance of involving all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society organizations, migrant's organizations, employers, private recruitment agencies, research institutions and international organizations, in providing support to female migrant workers to better defend their rights. Recommendations were made to the various stakeholders emphasizing the human rights and dignity of female migrant workers throughout the migration cycle, in both the countries of origin and of destination.

31. The participants recommended that the Governments of countries of origin develop comprehensive migration policies to facilitate safe and protected migratory movements, taking gender into account. In this regard, policies banning the migration of women should be revised so that irregular migration can be reduced to the extent possible. The social and economic rights of women should be ensured so that they can choose whether to migrate or not.

32. The need to collect sex-disaggregated data/statistics on migration was considered important in order for Governments to design gender-sensitive migration policies. IOM, INSTRAW and the International Labour Organization (ILO) should encourage the adoption of comparable sex-disaggregated data collection systems. It was also recommended that INSTRAW and IOM pursue their mutual efforts to increase awareness of the specific situation and needs of female migrant workers and, to that effect, carry out studies on female migrant workers in other regions such as Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. It was felt that Governments and civil society organizations in countries of origin should both be involved in monitoring the conditions of employment of female migrants in major receiving countries.

33. The need to supply migrants with adequate information and pre-departure training was emphasized as was the use of information technology for that purpose. Training for front-line agencies such as immigration, police and consular officials, on proper handling of migrants victims of traumatic stress as a result of gender-based violence was also recommended. INSTRAW and IOM could play an important role in the design of such training. Supportive measures should also be provided to ensure the welfare of the families

of female migrants, taking into consideration the needs of different members of their families, with particular attention to the educational loss that might affect the girl child as a result of the migration of the principal woman in the family.

34. As an immediate follow-up, it was recommended that INSTRAW and IOM arrange national seminars with relevant stakeholders in order to inform and sensitize citizens on female migrant issues. The seminars, among other things, should disseminate the findings of the field surveys conducted in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and the results of the INSTRAW/IOM expert group meeting. The proceedings of the expert group meeting will be published during the last quarter of 1999 by INSTRAW and IOM.

35. During the period under review, INSTRAW made a contribution on the migration aspects of labour mobility to the forthcoming publication *1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Secretariat. The Institute also participated in relevant international meetings relating to migration issues, such as the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development held at The Hague, 29 June-3 July 1998.

Women networking for conflict prevention and resolution

36. The need to include the gender dimension in peace and security issues has been widely recognized by the United Nations. The need for research on the role of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution and on the extent and the nature of their participation in peace processes has also been emphasized.

37. INSTRAW has identified a need to develop a common conceptual framework and a methodology for research and networking on this issue in order to answer such questions as: What are the effects of rising conflicts on gender roles/relations? What mechanisms can be established to empower women to create alternative solutions for themselves as well as for conflict prevention/resolution? In what ways have the strategies for conflict prevention/resolution used by women's organizations helped shape public opinion and national policy-making? How can women's experiences and activities be utilized within the framework of the wider United Nations agenda of international security and peacekeeping?

38. These questions are addressed in a research project on women networking for conflict prevention and resolution, developed by INSTRAW. The project is based on an innovative methodology which attempts to integrate research and network-oriented action for analysis, conflict prevention and confidence-building. The methodology is participatory and gives primary emphasis to strengthening local capacity for research, networking and action in order to achieve longer term collaboration and sustainability of the network itself. As such, it consists of the following two phases:

(a) The first phase encompasses conceptual and research aspects of the network of women's organizations as research devices to assist in the production and analysis of the required information and to develop, execute and test the effectiveness of different conflict resolution strategies. Two selected research centres, one in Serbia and one in Kosovo, were to coordinate the activities of the network. Creating a sustainable base for the future functioning and engagement of the network is one of the important objectives of this phase;

(b) The second phase will encompass operational aspects of the network and production of information to be fed into INSTRAW's database on good practices of integrating gender issues into the politics of conflict-ridden areas. This phase will also attempt to extend the network in surrounding countries and other regions and will require collaborative efforts among different United Nations agencies and other international organizations operating in the selected countries.

39. The preparatory activities for this research project included an extensive bibliographical search and review of literature in order to identify the methodological and conceptual gaps in studying the issue of gender and conflict. The first phase of the project, entailing field research/case studies, was not initiated until the third quarter of 1999, due to the crisis in Kosovo. Phase one of the project, which also includes a regional expert group meeting, is expected to be finalized in the first quarter of 2000. Phase two, will be carried over to the year 2000. United Nations University has made a financial contribution to the first phase of the project.

B. Training programme

40. During the period under review, INSTRAW began a revision of its training approach in response to various recommendations pointing to the need to link the Institute's training activities to its research findings and follow-up by the Institute. As a result, during the biennium 1998-1999 the Institute's training activities in traditional areas were limited to those outlined below.

Statistics and indicators on gender issues

41. The National Training Seminar on Sex-disaggregated Data and Gender Statistics in Mongolia was organized by the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of External Relations of Mongolia and INSTRAW and was held from 26 to 28 May 1999 in Ulaanbaatar, in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the United Nations, the National Statistics Office and the Department of Youth, Family and Women of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

42. The Seminar was attended by representatives and experts from government Ministries, central and district offices affiliated to the National Statistics Office, non-governmental organizations, users of statistics, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and international organizations located in the country.

43. The Seminar addressed the following major topics: the need for sex-disaggregated statistics and indicators; status of sex-disaggregated data in the statistical system of Mongolia; development of gender statistics and indicators on employment; data requirements and gaps in social policy-making; and tools for compiling and analysing statistical data on women and men and producing national reports. The Seminar specifically emphasized the need for gender statistics in the areas of major concern in the National Programme of Action on the Advancement of Women in Mongolia — namely: education; rural women; women and their status/rights in the family; women and poverty; violence against women; and women at decision-making levels.

44. The results of the training seminar included a user-friendly publication on gender indicators in Mongolia, published in both English and local languages.

National training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development

45. In cooperation with the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (Distance Education Centre), INSTRAW conducted the National Training Seminar on Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development from 24 to 28 August 1998 in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

46. Thirty participants from various governmental departments and non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar where the following issues were addressed: Agenda 21 and United Nations initiatives on women and environmental health; women as agents of change in the development sector; women as managers of the environment; and women, environmental indicators and capacity-building. Working group discussions produced valuable conclusions and recommendations that will enhance women's involvement in the processes of environmental management and sustainable development in the Solomon Islands.

Workshop on human rights and trafficking in women

47. INSTRAW collaborated with the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) and the Women's Studies Programme of the University of Puerto Rico in a regional Latin American and Caribbean workshop on women's human rights, traffic and migration, held at INSTRAW from 21 to 27 June 1998. The 16 participants, represented selected women's organizations in the region. The principal objective of the meeting was to familiarize the participants with existing international instruments which could be used in addressing issues related to human rights violations of trafficked women. The participants shared local experiences in using such instruments and discussed strategies to ensure their effective use. INSTRAW made a presentation on the importance of international instruments in supporting the efforts of women's organizations in these matters.

Manual for enhancing the use of computer mediated communication

48. Based on a survey carried out in 1996 by INSTRAW on the use of electronic communications by women's organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, during the period under review INSTRAW designed an electronic manual in Spanish for enhancing the use of computer-mediated communications by women's organizations. In addition to providing technical guidelines for the use of electronic communications, the manual illustrates how they can be used to enhance the capacity of women's organizations to accomplish their strategic objectives through research, training, advocacy, networking and information dissemination. The manual also contains a directory with links to useful Web sites, mailing lists and news groups of particular interest to women and a comprehensive glossary and section of frequently asked questions. The manual was placed on-line (www.onu.org.do/instraw) for testing purposes in order to reach a wider geographical coverage while at the same time making a more cost-efficient use of its resources. The WomenWatch group of partners, which includes the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United

Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), have expressed interest in translating the manual into English and French in addition to making it available through the WomenWatch site, the United Nations Internet gateway on the advancement of women.

49. The Institute reinstated its internship programme which had been postponed since 1994. Five interns from various countries participated in the programme at headquarters in Santo Domingo and three at the liaison office in New York.

C. Inter-agency activities

50. Throughout the period under review, the Institute continued to collaborate with other United Nations agencies in many of its activities, including participation as a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality. In the context of the Inter-Agency Committee's work programme, INSTRAW collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the preparation of a project proposal to develop and implement a global electronic database and Internet network on gender-related training materials. The project has been designed to encourage inter-agency collaboration in the presentation, use and review of materials that support capacity-building on gender equality issues. The project has been deferred until the new structure and working method of the Institute are defined.

51. In an attempt for INSTRAW to finalize the project on time-use by women and men in the Dominican Republic, which had been carried over from past bienniums, due to technical difficulties, UNDP and INSTRAW collaborated in calculating weights for the samples of the time-use survey, thus enabling the data to be analysed. At the moment, the report of the project is being finalized. Further collaboration between the two entities will entail an assessment of the time-use methodology developed by INSTRAW.

52. INSTRAW provided substantive inputs for ensuring a gender-sensitive approach to the conceptualization, conduct and reporting of the Caribbean Civil Society Symposium, at the request of the UNDP resident representative in Trinidad and Tobago. The Institute was subsequently invited to participate in the Symposium, held in July 1999 in Port-of-Spain. The theme of the Symposium was "Building community: moving towards equity" and was aimed at the development of a "Caribbean citizens agenda".

53. In its efforts to ensure that women and gender issues are reflected in the relevant coordinating mechanisms within the United Nations system, INSTRAW participated in the sessions of relevant commissions and committees, conferences and seminars related to the substantive programme of work of the Institute. INSTRAW participated in the fourth session of the Committee on Natural Resources (10-19 March 1998) and the third session of the Committee on Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development (3 March-April 1998), where it presented statements on the role of women and INSTRAW's work in relevant areas. INSTRAW also participated in the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (April 1998).

54. The joint Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)/INSTRAW/Statistics Division of the United Nations work session on gender statistics was held in Geneva from 20 to 22 April 1998. INSTRAW presented a paper on gender aspects of intergenerational solidarity in Europe and participated in an informal group meeting to identify emerging issues to be covered by the next work session on gender statistics.

55. INSTRAW was represented by several Board members at the following inter-agency meetings: the seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Vienna in April 1998; the Meeting on Women and Health, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in Tunisia in September 1998; the International Conference on Population and Development Advocacy in the Global Information and Knowledge Management Age: Creating a New Culture, organized by UNFPA in Turkey in December 1998; and the Second Arab Meeting for Follow-up to the Beijing Conference, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Lebanon in December 1998.

56. At its headquarters in Santo Domingo, INSTRAW hosted a training workshop on gender mainstreaming for gender focal points and volunteers organized by the UNDP Gender in Development Unit, the United Nations Volunteers and UNIFEM, from 18-26 May 1998. In addition, INSTRAW made substantive contributions.

57. In the host country, INSTRAW participated on a regular basis in all inter-agency meetings of the United Nations system, including meetings of the thematic group on women/gender issues. In addition, it made substantive contributions to discussions on documents prepared by the system.

58. In compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48 of 31 July 1998, the Institute held an Inter-Agency Brainstorming Workshop from 3 to 4 May 1999, in New York. Representatives from INSTRAW and its Board of Trustees, the Division for the Advancement of

Women, UNIFEM, UNDP and ESCWA, representing all the regional commissions, attended the meeting. Representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the Dominican Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were also present. The meeting addressed two main items: emerging trends and challenges for gender equality; and conceptual frameworks and work strategies of different United Nations agencies responding to those emerging trends.

59. At the Workshop, INSTRAW presented a discussion paper on emerging trends and challenges for the advancement of women and gender equality, as well as its strategic plan and work programme for 2000-2003, and received valuable inputs from the participants. Special focus was given to INSTRAW's new approach to research and training which is based on increased networking and collaboration with academic and research institutions and the creation and maintenance of a global interactive service on gender research and training resources. The discussions, based on presentations by the various participating agencies, highlighted the usefulness of increased networking, both for the work of the United Nations and for the capacity-building of the local and national research centres that will be part of the network. One important point raised during the Workshop related to the need to find further mechanisms and instruments that would more effectively link the work of different United Nations entities, in providing research findings to guide policy recommendations and, in turn, receiving feedback from the operational agencies on their research and training needs.

D. Other activities related to research and training

60. As a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons (1999), INSTRAW prepared a monograph entitled, "Ageing in a gendered world: women's issues and identities". It contained papers that examine such issues as the effects of privatizing pension systems and what women lose in retirement benefits when they take time off from work to take care of children. Other issues examined included: the economic, social and cultural factors that encourage the expectation that women will take care of the elderly; whether "care-giver" is a universal female identity; and widowhood and how it is affected by the economic and demographic changes occurring in different parts of the world. The monograph will be published during the last quarter of 1999.

61. The Institute published the first of its occasional papers, entitled "Engendering the global agenda: a success story of women and the United Nations". The paper examines the changing objectives of women's global agenda and documents the shift in emphasis from securing equality between women and men to the recognition of equality, peace and development as prerequisites for women's equal participation in decision-making processes and to mainstreaming the gender perspective in the 1990s. The paper was distributed at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

62. INSTRAW was invited to present a paper on methodological issues of measurement and valuation of unpaid work at the International Seminar on Gender, State and Macroeconomics, held in Cartagena, Colombia and organized by the Colombian Ministry of Planning and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation from 4 to 6 June 1998. The paper was published as part of a monograph on the Seminar.

63. INSTRAW presented substantive papers at the following conferences: Seminar on Evaluation of Equality Policies, organized by the International University Menéndez Pelayo, Santander, Spain, 29 June-1 July 1998 (at the invitation of the INSTRAW focal point in Spain); Conference on the Empowerment of Arab Women, organized by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, 3-4 December 1998, in Beirut, Lebanon; and Conference on Science and Research Policy in Turkish Agriculture, organized by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, 21-22 December 1998, in Ankara, Turkey.

E. Information, documentation and communication

64. As a result of the cost reduction measures undertaken by INSTRAW, the internal printing facilities were closed and the overall work programme of the relevant unit was substantially cut back during the period under review.

65. Despite financial and other constraints, the Information, Communication and Documentation Unit prepared several publications, among them executive summaries in French and Spanish of previous INSTRAW publications.[4] Two issues of *INSTRAW News* were published: No. 28 was dedicated to gender equality and women's human rights, in observation of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and No. 29 focused on women's lifecycle and ageing, in

anticipation of the International Year of Older Persons (1999). INSTRAW's "Profile for the new millennium", a general informative booklet about INSTRAW and its work, was published and widely distributed.

66. The Institute also prepared the INSTRAW 1999 agenda, which includes a complete list of INSTRAW's focal points as a tribute to women from all parts of the world who, through their personal actions, contributed to the advancement of women. In the preparation of the agenda, INSTRAW received the valuable collaboration of its focal points in the following countries: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

67. The Institute public information activities included participation in the annual meetings of the Joint United Nations Information Committees (JUNIC) (twenty-fourth session, Rome, Italy, from 8 to 10 July 1998). INSTRAW also provided information for the JUNIC Information Exchange Bulletin. As in previous bienniums, INSTRAW participated in the United Nations Information Fair held at United Nations Headquarters.

68. Other public information activities included a segment of a weekly television programme in the Dominican Republic on INSTRAW activities. The segment was shown in conjunction with the International Day of No Violence Against Women (25 November) and featured information on the overall initiatives of the United Nations system to combat violence against women.

69. In compliance with auditors' recommendations, the use of the Institute's installed computer system has been significantly increased. This includes the expansion of INSTRAW's internal network and wider access to the Internet. Thus the Institute's ability to perform bibliographic searches and remain abreast of the latest developments in research and training worldwide has improved considerably.

F. The Institute's advocacy network

70. Due to cost-reduction measures, the INSTRAW liaison office in New York was closed. As of 31 March 1999, all the Institute's operational activities are being carried out from its headquarters in Santo Domingo.

71. INSTRAW continued to interact with its network of focal points. Activities included collaboration with the General Directorate for the Promotion of Women (Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer), the focal point in the Dominican Republic, in the design and conduct of a training programme for women politicians on how to incorporate gender into policy-making. In addition, at a workshop for governmental officials organized by the General Directorate, INSTRAW conducted training sessions on the measurement and valuation of unpaid work and on United Nations instruments and the human rights of women.

72. The Institute of Development Studies at the University of Helsinki and the Italian Association for Women in Development, INSTRAW focal points, facilitated INSTRAW's contact with governmental officials and women's groups in Europe.

IV. Financial situation of the Institute

73. INSTRAW is funded solely from voluntary contributions. Since its inception, the Institute has received contributions from 79 Member States, from both developed and developing countries. INSTRAW's estimated expenditures for 1998-1999 were approved by the Institute's Board of Trustees at $3.8 million, on the basis of projected resources, including reserves available at the Trust Fund ($2 million as of 1 January 1998) and expected pledges for the biennium. This amount was later reduced to $2,516,619 to adjust the level of expenditures to the income received for the period, which only amounted to $1,046,007, in addition to the above reserves of $2 million in the Trust Fund.

74. The lowered level of contributions received by INSTRAW during the current biennium has reduced the Institute's overall capacity to comply with its mandate and hampered its immediate ability to implement the approved programme of activities for the biennium 1998-1999. In spite of its serious financial situation, the Institute has achieved significant progress in the implementation of a condensed but sound substantive programme of work. These achievements are proof of the Institute's capacity to regain its former levels of performance if it is provided with adequate resources.

V. Conclusion

75. Two decades ago the international community identified the need for and created an Institute that could promote and conduct the specific research and training required for advancing the situation of women worldwide. At present, INSTRAW's activities are an integral part of the overall efforts of the United Nations to achieve gender

equality. Since the Institute's establishment, Member States have continuously reaffirmed their commitment to INSTRAW, through resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Institute acknowledges and appreciates the reliance of those Member States that have steadily supported its work and activities throughout the years. However, it is only with commensurate levels of financial support and leadership that INSTRAW can realistically and effectively fulfil its role and accomplish the tasks it has been mandated.

Notes

[1] *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] *The Migration of Women: Methodological Issues in the Measurement and Analysis of Internal and International Migration*; *Measurement and Valuation of Unpaid Contribution: Accounting through Time and Output*; and *Valuation of Household Production and the Satellite Accounts*.